

Gzhiiwang Ziibi Dabaadjimowin

Government news you can use

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Rapid River News!

October 29, 2007



From L.R.B.O.I.

(The following information comes from a weekly update supplied concerning the tribal government, local communities and issues that affect overall tribal business. The department or persons involved is shown at the end of each item. If the item is general in nature, PA will appear for Public Affairs)

(Natural Resource related items)

- **Consent Decree Signing!** Five tribes along with representatives from the State of Michigan and the Federal Government met in Petosky at the Odawa Hotel to hold an official signing of the recently completed Consent Decree that reaffirms the rights of our people to hunt, fish and gather here in Michigan. Full details and comments will be in the next *Currents*.
- **Deer Education Program.** Nate Svoboda and the Natural Resources Department held a wonderful educational evening for over 60 people who came in to learn about deer, their habitat and the natural environment in our area. This is an annual affair and is very popular with Tribal members and the public as well.

(Public Safety/Court related items)

- **CHOICES Evening.** Judge Angela Sherigan, working with Kareen Lewis and others from the tribe held an evening silent auction to raise money for CHOICES in Manistee. This event was held at the Justice Center with music, hors d'oeuvres and a wonderful selection of donated items. A story will appear in the next *Currents*.

(General area items)

- **Mary Bower Fundraiser.** The dinner/dance held October 26th for Mary Bower at the Civic Club in Manistee was a very nice event. Mary was able to attend and she expressed her gratitude to everyone for their support. Numerous fund-raising events have been held for Mary and she is in everyone's prayers.
- **Muskegon Casino.** One of the people promoting the redevelopment of downtown Muskegon announced at a meeting last week that much of the development was going to stem around the building of a Tribally-owned Casino. The statement referenced the steps including affirmation of the Grand River tribe which is historically from that part of Michigan. No confirmation or comments was made by any other tribes regarding the announcement.
- **Manistee County Commission decries "Insufficient Funds."** At the commission meeting the week of October 22nd, the Commissioners had an extensive discussion about the fact that there were not going to be sufficient P.I.L.T. funds for some of their grant requests. Reference was made to the recent expansion of the Event Center and how the county was not receiving any profit from it. The Compact which allowed for the Little River Casino to be built stipulated the Revenue Sharing funds would be from 2% of the Electronic Gaming Revenue but did not address other venues such as the Event Center.

(Tribal Government-Department items)

- **Employee Halloween Luncheon.** The government employees held a special costume luncheon at the Community Center this month. At the luncheon, the Employee of the Month was announced. The winner was Stephanie Chou.

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Editorial (Alpena News): Consent decree a positive step for tribes and sportsmen

While we are not surprised area sportsmen are not thrilled with the recently negotiated inland hunting, fishing and gathering decree with Native Americans, we would hope that given time, they would be more understanding and receptive of it.

Obviously over the next 12 to 24 months all of us will have a clearer picture of just exactly what the consent decree actually means in day-to-day life. While we expect there to be changes for sportsmen, we are hopeful those changes will be minimal and would have relatively little impact to their overall enjoyment outdoors.

We believe it important that sportsmen understand the consent decree is the sweeter pill to swallow regarding inland water and hunting issues. Had the decree not been negotiated, it is all but certain tribal members would have retained those privileges, and probably more, through a federal lawsuit. At least with the decree sportsmen protected some areas — such as not allowing tribal members commercial access to the inland areas — something neighboring states were not so successful at preventing.

Anyone who has experienced past negotiations between the state and tribes in federal court understands how contentious those have been. We believe this year's negotiations marked a huge breakthrough on both sides in maturity and trust issues.

And, let's be blunt. The state of Michigan does not enjoy excess funding these days and the Department of Natural Resources does not have a large budget. Tribal biologists and conservation officers, however, do not face that same challenge. The truth is, with the cooperative spirit that exists today between the DNR and tribal scientists and law officers, the state's natural resources have two allies looking out for them right now rather than just one. In the end, that might turn out to be a blessing for everyone.

No, we don't expect sportsmen to be happy, but we don't see this decree as the evil monster it could have been.

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(compiled by Office of Public Affairs)

If you have any specific questions, ideas or comments regarding this information, please address them to:
The Public Information Office, LRBOI, 375 River Street, Manistee, MI. 49660. 231-398-6840.

Or send them direct to currentscomments@lrboi.com.

Your comments will be forwarded to the right person at the tribal government within 24 hours.